

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

An alliance of the CLC, NLC, CAALAS, NAAJA and AMSANT

MEDIA RELEASE

Mandatory rehabilitation bill must be released for public consultation – APO NT

24 April 2013

Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT) today called on the NT Government to release its mandatory rehabilitation legislation for public consultation prior to the next Parliamentary sittings in mid-May. On 11 April the NT Government announced it would introduce legislation in the next Parliamentary sittings to require repeat problem drinkers to undertake mandatory alcohol treatment.

APO NT believes it is vital for key stakeholders to be provided with an opportunity to consider the legislation, and to provide feedback on the impacts and workability of rolling-out this unprecedented scheme.

“To demonstrate that this is about health outcomes not politics the NT Government needs to release this legislation for public consultation”, said Priscilla Collins, CEO of NAAJA.

“There are unacceptably high levels of alcohol related harm in the NT and alcohol is affecting the health of our peoples. We agree strong action needs to be taken to address this harm, however we believe action must be evidence-based. This legislation should not be rushed” said Mr Paterson, CEO AMSANT.

“This consultation process will allow the Government to consider the evidence from the service providers and professionals—what will work, and what won’t work,” said Mr Paterson.

“The legislative changes will significantly impact on a number of important stakeholders who have an interest in what will happen once this legislation becomes a reality. This includes significant resourcing implications, particularly for legal aid services. It is essential that these stakeholders be given a chance to consider the details of the planned legislative proposals.” said Ms Collins.

“The release of the legislation for public consultation will demonstrate that the NT Government is committed to transparency in decision-making and to show it is open to working with stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes,” said Ms Collins.

“Solutions should be based on the best possible evidence – a view we hope that the NT Government shares”, said Mr Paterson.

For further information, contact Sarah Barr on 0487 341 117.